



2016 Rocky Mountain Area Priority Trainee and Operating Procedures

(updated February 23, 2016)

Purpose

The purpose of the Rocky Mountain Priority Trainee Program (RMTPT) is to establish a uniform process to identify and promote employees for obtaining wildland fire management experience and to assist in meeting agency workforce development needs. It will also be used to address critical position shortages within the Rocky Mountain Area (RMA) and to support succession planning for RMA Incident Management Teams (IMT). The Rocky Mountain Priority Trainee Program is the primary tool being utilized for career development, succession planning for incident response, and increased dispatch capacity as we develop the future of incident management and agency workforce in the Rocky Mountain.

Definition of a Priority Trainee

This designator reflects someone serving in a trainee position that is in critical need of receiving on the job training to: 1) meet a job requirement, 2) help fill a critical position shortage, or 3) career development. Examples of a priority trainee are listed below.

1. **Position Job Requirement** – This qualification card trainee position is required for your position description qualification in your primary job.
2. **Critical Position Shortage** – The Rocky Mountain Area Coordinating Group (RMCG) and RMA Federal and State Agencies have identified critical shortage positions which are needed on RMA IMTs or within agency workforce organizational structure. Positions include from the lowest level up in all functional areas with the exception of operations, which will be TFLD and up only.
3. **Career Development** – Established Agency Individual Development Plans (IDP's) for future advancement for career path to meet agency workforce development.

Rocky Mountain Priority Trainee Program Process

The Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) will manage and maintain the Rocky Mountain priority trainee list. The GATRs will coordinate with each other during heightened incident activity and will share opportunities for mobilization of priority trainees across GACC boundaries. GATRs will coordinate with the GACC, IMT, NIMO, and hosting Agency Administrators to ensure trainee lists are implemented for mobilization.

Priority Trainees will be mobilized in accordance with the following protocols:

1. Agency/State or Cooperator employees (includes Permanent, Career or Seasonal Federal, State, permanent FD/local Agency cooperators, tribal employees)
2. Emergency Hire Firefighters (ADs) or Cooperator (Supplemental) hired thru State or local FD cooperator agreements)

Trainees Positions Included in the Trainee Priority Program:

1. Incident Commander Type 1-3
2. All Command Staff positions
3. All Logistics Section positions
4. All Finance Section positions including Incident Business Advisors; Buying Team Positions
5. All Planning Section positions
6. Operations Section positions Task Force Leader and above
7. Air Operations positions Helicopter Manager or Single Engine Air Tanker Manager and above
8. All Dispatch, Coordination and Intelligence positions.

Trainees are rated/scored on the Priority Trainee Nomination Form according to the following criteria:

- Qualification is needed for primary job position description.
- Trainee task book completion % and time left until expiration.
- Trainee is an active participant on IMTs and is advancing into C&G positions.

- Trainee needs to re-certify or have a task book reissued for a position.
- Trainee position is required for career or personal development and identified in the IDP.

Each of these criteria are assigned a point score and used to rank trainees for a given position using the priority training nomination form, thus maximizing the opportunities to achieve incident assignments and task book completion. Once a trainee is recommended for certification by an evaluator, the GATR will work with the Zone Training Representative and remove the individual from the Priority Trainee List.

Individuals can complete the nomination form for 2 Priority Trainee positions in separate function areas. This ensures a focused approach on the one position and achieving multiple assignments to attain the needed qualification.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trainee, Supervisor and Local Unit Training Officer

- The trainee will work with their supervisor to determine if position is to meet a job requirement, help fill a critical position shortage, or career development identified in the employee's development plan (DP).
- The trainee recognizes that they are responsible for maintaining accurate resource availability status in the ROSS program (using the AVAILABLE GACC status) and that the trainee's supervisor has a role in ensuring that the trainee is given opportunities to be available for priority trainee assignments.
- The trainee is also responsible for ensuring that a copy of the trainee's performance evaluations is forwarded to the RM GATR.
- The Local Unit Training Officer will review the employee's DP and training and experience record.
- With approval from the supervisor, a position task book will be initiated in the qualification system (IQCS or IQS) and the trainee will work with the unit training officer to complete the Priority Trainee nomination form for inclusion in the trainee prioritization program. The Local Unit Training Officer will forward nomination to Zone Training Representative.
- Trainees wishing to participate on incident management teams (IMTs) should also apply in ICAP during the annual open period.
- Local Unit Training Officers will ensure non-fire management employees, i.e., "militia" employees, are included in the trainee prioritization program.

Zone Training Representative

- Each Zone Training Representative will submit a copy of the nomination forms and Trainee Prioritization Worksheet for their Zone to the RM Training Committee by the third week of March annually.
- Any unique Rocky Mountain trainees (technical specialists, READS, etc.) should be incorporated by the Zones into their trainee spreadsheet. If not, the GATR will prioritize at the GACC level.
- Each Zone Training Representative will ensure that trainee availability is correctly reflected in the PT spreadsheet.

Rocky Mountain Training Committee

- The zone worksheets will be compiled into a master worksheet by the GATR by the end of March.
- The agency training representatives on the committee will establish trainee priorities annually when zone priority scores for a position are identical.
- The committee chair will sign and submit the Trainee Prioritization report to the RMCG.

Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR)

- The GATR will maintain the annual Rocky Mountain combined Trainee Prioritization Worksheet and provide it to the RM coordination and local dispatch centers.
- The GATR, working with the RM coordination center coordinators, Incident Training Specialists and other GATRs, will solicit assignments for trainees within and outside the Geographic Area based on levels of activity and opportunity.
- The GATR will distribute an availability list of priority trainees for use by the coordination centers in mobilizing trainees as needed.
- Performance evaluations for all priority trainees shall be forwarded to the GATR. The GATR will forward all negative performance evaluations to the trainee's Operations Committee agency representative. Negative trainee performance evaluation may influence the priority status of trainees.
- The GATR will assist other GATRs in placing their priority trainees on RM incidents when opportunities exist.

- The Trainee Prioritization Tracking Worksheet will be used to track individual participation on fire assignments. This worksheet will be filled out by the RMACC and GATR as assignments are filled. This worksheet will be used to prepare the final report.
- The GATR will provide a report to the committee by the October meeting for their review

Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center (RMACC)

- RMACC will use the Trainee Prioritization worksheet to the greatest extent possible for filling all trainee orders received, including any special trainee programs established in the Rocky Mountain.
- RMACC and GATR will work together to determine and place a priority trainee coordinator (i.e. TNSP, EDSD) at RMCC to assist in coordinating and mobilizing RM priority trainees at higher preparedness levels.
- Name requests for priority trainees will be honored within the RM and nationally. Name requests for priority trainees will be approved by the GATR, or designated acting priority trainee representative. Indicate in the ROSS Special Needs or Documentation fields that the name request is for a Priority Trainee (has to be name on the RM priority trainee list to be name requested).
- Trainees already assigned to an incident may be ordered to another incident in their priority trainee position. Length of incident assignment rules (e.g. on day 10 of 14) or distance to meet date/time requested may preclude reassignment.

Rocky Mountain Area Priority Trainee's Host Dispatch Centers

- Ensures timely and accurate ROSS availability of local priority trainee resources
- Informs RMACC and/or RM GATR if a priority trainee is mobilized outside of these procedures (i.e. training opportunity develops not using the National Priority Trainee/GATR system).
- Communicates with the Zone Training Representatives and RMACC regularly with any issues or concerns related to the RM Priority Trainee program and priority trainee assignments.

Rocky Mountain Area Incident Expanded Dispatch

- Consults the priority trainee list when assigning trainees to an incident.
- Informs RMACC and/or RM GATR if a priority trainee is mobilized outside of these procedures (i.e. training opportunity develops not using the national Priority Trainee/GATR system).
- Facilitates with the RM GATR and/or RMACC priority trainee mobilization and reassignments if the priority trainee is released from the incident assignment and length of assignment rules and/or date & time requested allow for a quality reassignment

Rocky Mountain Operations Committee and Incident Management Teams

- Rocky Mountain IMTs will select six trainees during the team selection process to fill the trainee positions that fit the needs of the team. Those trainees will be rostered throughout the duration of the season as a team member until their position taskbook is completed. Then a new trainee will be selected by the team.
- Additional trainee/mentee positions allowed on each IMT will be identified on the roster prior to their On-Call rotation. If the IMT is assigned to an incident, RMACC in coordination with the RM GATR will fill the identified PT trainee team roster position using priority trainees from the Rocky Mountain Area Priority Trainee list. If a priority trainee is not available for the identified trainee roster position, the GATR in coordination with RMACC will attempt to find other available trainees within the RMA.
- Once assigned to an incident, IMTs will determine what additional trainee position needs or opportunities they have and will work with the RM GATR and/or the RMACC to fill those positions.
- The Operations Committee, in consultation with the ICs, will identify and prioritize critical geographic area position shortages to be targeted for the six additional Priority Trainee positions.
- *Also see Chapter 20 of the Rocky Mountain Mobilization Guide.*

Incident Training Specialist (TNSP)

- Incident Training Specialists will coordinate with the GATR and hosting RM GACC to fill trainee positions on incidents.
- TNSPs are responsible to document each assignment for a Priority Trainee including:
 - PTB percentage completed. Those in the 90-100% should provide remarks pertaining to their remaining tasks; such as 2 tasks remaining (firing operations/structure protection).

- Performance evaluation
- A copy of the trainee documentation package will be included in the incident documentation package and sent to the GATR.

Trainee Availability

- Trainees are responsible for maintaining their availability for trainee assignments in ROSS, either personally through their ROSS account, through their unit dispatcher, or with the assistance of their dispatch center training representative. Trainees should follow their dispatch center statusing procedures.
- Trainees will status themselves as available in ROSS when they wish to be available for trainee assignments. When trainees are unavailable for assignments their status must be changed to unavailable in ROSS. The trainee should use the **“AVAILABLE GACC”** status code.
- Trainees will be mobilized according to the highest priority *Available* trainee. If showing unavailable in ROSS, they will not be called for an assignment. However, any trainees identified and nominated for the program should be reasonably available for 1 or more assignments throughout the season.
- Trainees who list themselves as available in ROSS who subsequently refuse one or more priority trainee assignments when not committed to an incident may be moved to the bottom of the list.

Nomination Process and Timelines

The nomination and prioritization process for trainees is similar to the process already in place for interagency fire training courses. Priority Trainee program announcement and nomination forms will be distributed by February 1, 2015. The forms must be sent to the Local Unit Training Officer by March 15 annually.

Timelines are as follows:

Timeframe	Task	Responsibility
Feb. 18-March 15	Announce the nomination period for Priority Trainees	GATR/RMACC
March 15-30	Zone Rep prioritize worksheets and send to GATR	Zone/GATR/Agency Training Reps
April 1-15	Compile Zone lists and generate GACC-wide list	Training Committee/GATR
Oct 1	Zone Rep update zone worksheets and send to GATR	Zone Rep/GATR
Oct 15	GATR compile Zone lists and update GACC list	Zone Rep/GATR

The process to participate in the priority trainee program:

- Trainees will work with local unit fire training officers to complete the nomination form.
- Local unit training officers will prioritize trainees by position and submit their lists to the Zone Training Representative.
- The Zone Training Representatives will determine trainee priorities by position for the zone following established zone prioritization procedures
- The Rocky Mountain Training Committee will set final Rocky Mountain priorities for each position.
- The Rocky Mountain GATR will compile and maintain the list and provide it to the Rocky Mountain Area coordination center.
- When there is an opportunity for a trainee to mobilize within or outside of the Rocky Mountain region, RMACC will utilize the priority trainee list to fill the orders in coordination with the RM GATR.

Zone Training Representatives

Current Zone Training Reps can be found at: <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/rm/zones>

If you have any questions please contact Kim Bang, Rocky Mountain GATR at kbang@blm.gov, office 970-257-4802 or cell 970-623-0217.